

Gordon Bettles (Klamath)  
University of Oregon, MS '03 (Individualized Program:  
Anthropology, Linguistics, International Studies)

Enrolled tribal member Gordon Bettles (qaW' s?os?att'is) was a dedicated advocate, cultural leader, and educator whose work profoundly shaped Indigenous life at the University of Oregon and beyond. A 2003 graduate of the university's individualized master's program in anthropology, linguistics, and international studies, Bettles became the first steward of the Many Nations Longhouse, serving in that role from 2003 to 2015. In this capacity, he nurtured a vital gathering space that supported Indigenous students, fostered cultural expression, and strengthened community ties.



Prior to his work at the University of Oregon, Bettles played a foundational role in the early Klamath language revitalization efforts of the 1980s and 1990s, serving as Culture and Heritage Director for the Klamath Tribes. His leadership during this critical period helped preserve and promote the Klamath language and cultural traditions, contributing to ongoing efforts to sustain and revitalize Indigenous knowledge for future generations.

Bettles expanded his impact at the university in 2013 when he assumed the role of director of Native American initiatives. In this position, he facilitated consultation with Native American tribes and organizations, advancing meaningful partnerships while providing support to Native communities both on campus and throughout the region. His work reflected a deep commitment to representation, respect, and collaboration.

Among Bettles' many lasting contributions, the Oregon Flagpole Project stands as a visible and enduring symbol of his vision. What began in 2012 as a class project by students in the Lundquist College of Business grew under his guidance into a powerful expression of recognition and unity. Serving as project advisor, Bettles helped bring together Native groups across campus to support the initiative. In October 2014, nine flagpoles bearing the emblems of Oregon's federally recognized tribal nations were installed in the EMU Amphitheater, where they continue to stand as a testament to the presence and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples.

Gordon Bettles passed away in 2020, yet his legacy lives on through the spaces he helped create, the relationships he strengthened, and the generations of students and community members he inspired. This blanket is presented to a graduating student as a reminder to walk in honor and in memory—uplifting community, culture, and those who came before.

*Pendleton blanket provided by the Bettles family - May 2026*